

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are currently pending in the application. New claims 27-29 are presented for consideration.

Claims 21, 23 and 25 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,154,072 (Leyden) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,167,245 (Harriet). Claims 1-7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22 and 24 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103 as obvious over Leyden in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,020,192 (Gerlach). Claim 26 stands rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over Leyden in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,746,909, to Israel et al. Claims 8, 13 and 14 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over Leyden in view of Gerlach and Harriet. Claims 9, 11, 17 and 19 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as obvious over Leyden in view of Gerlach and Israel.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-26 and favorable consideration of new claims 27-29 are requested.

Claim 1 has been amended, without changing its scope, to support language in amended claim 6.

Claim 1 characterizes at least one of the first and second legs as movable relative to the connector so that the effective diameter of the closed first loop is variable. The first free end of the flexible cord is directed through the closed first loop so as to define a closed second loop with an effective diameter that is variable by selectively oppositely moving the flexible cord through the closed first loop.

Leyden discloses a lasso arrangement as disclosed in applicant's Fig. 1 and described in the specification as "prior art". The cable loop 82, which would correspond

to the closed first loop recited in applicant's claim 1, does not have a variable diameter. Instead, there is a crimping element which fixes the diameter thereof.

The Examiner's reliance on Gerlach, in combination with Leyden, in rejecting claim 1, is not understood. For claim 1 to be obvious from the combination of Leyden and Gerlach, there must be some motivation gleaned from Gerlach, by one skilled in this art, to modify Leyden to arrive at the structure in claim 1.

Gerlach does disclose a loop that has a variable diameter by reason of sliding movement of the cable 22 relative to the handle 26. However, the loop defined at the handle 26 is not used to receive another part of the flexible cord to define a second loop as recited in the above noted limitations in applicant's claim 1. Nothing in Gerlach is passed through the corresponding loop defined at the handle 26. Accordingly, claim 1 is not obvious from the combination of Leyden and Gerlach.

Claims 2-7, 10 and 12 depend cognately from claim 1 and recite further significant structural detail to further distinguish over the combination of Leyden and Gerlach.

As one example, claim 6, as amended, characterizes the at least one opening as a single opening into which the base and first and second legs can be directed by movement, base first, into the single opening with the base and first and second legs in the U-shaped configuration.

There is no structure in Leyden or Gerlach which allows cooperation between a connector and a flexible cord as recited in claim 6. The cord in Gerlach has to be threaded through the handle 26 after which the plug 34 is installed or the loop retainer 24 is crimped in place.

Claim 15 has been amended as claim 1 to support language in new claim 29. The scope of claim 15 has not been changed.

Claim 15 recites that the first and second legs are each movable relative to the connector so that the effective diameter of the closed first loop is variable. The first free end of the flexible cord is directed through the closed first loop so as to define a closed second loop with an effective diameter that is variable by selectively oppositely moving the flexible cord through the closed first loop.

These limitations differ from those pointed out with respect to claim 1 in that both of the first and second legs are each movable relative to the connector. The arguments advanced relative to the allowability of claim 1 apply equally to claim 15.

Claims 16, 18 and 20 each depend from claim 15 and recite further significant structural detail to further distinguish over the combination of Leyden and Gerlach.

The Examiner has relied on various combinations of Leyden with Gerlach, Israel, and Harriet, in rejecting claims 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17 and 19. None of these patents, either alone or in combination teaches or suggests the structure in the base claims 1 and 15, from which these claims depend. These claims recite further significant structural detail to further distinguish over the cited art.

Claim 21 has been amended to characterize the closed first loop as having a diameter that is variable by sliding the flexible cord through the at least one opening. The first free end of the flexible cord is directed through the closed first loop with the flexible cord remaining slidable through the at least one opening such that the diameter of at least

the closed first loop can be varied as the first free end of the flexible cord is directed through the closed first loop.

Taking Leyden and Harriet in combination, there is no teaching or suggestion of directing a free end of a loop through a variable diameter loop. In each of Leyden and Harriet, the corresponding first loop has a fixed diameter. Consequently, there is no teaching or suggestion of performing the method as recited.

Claims 22-26 depend cognately from claim 21 and recite further significant limitations to further distinguish over the cited art.

Gerlach and Israel, relied upon in rejecting claims 22, 24 and 26, do not teach or suggest, either alone or in combination with any of the other cited references, the structure in the base claim from which each of these claims depend.

New claim 27 corresponds to claim 22 in independent form.

The art is devoid of any teaching or suggestion of preforming a flexible cord into a U shape which is directed, base first, through an opening.

Claim 28 corresponds to claim 24 in independent form. Claim 28 requires that the connector be provided with a single opening through which the first and second legs of the flexible cord extend. This is not taught or suggested in any of the art cited by the Examiner.

Claim 29 depends from claim 15 and includes limitations corresponding to those in amended claim 6. The arguments advanced relative to the allowability of claim 6 apply equally with respect to claim 29.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-26 and allowance of the case are requested.

The additional claim fee of \$115.00 is enclosed. Should additional fees be required in connection with this matter, please charge our deposit account No. 23-0785.

Respectfully submitted,

By



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Date:

Nov 24, 2004